

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1128

By Lynn

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the members of the Wilson County Emergency Management Agency K9 Search and Rescue Team and Fire Department for their heroic service to the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal concerns to ensure the public safety and welfare, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty in service of public safety; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued the time-honored tradition of volunteerism through public service, dedicating their time and efforts to aiding those in emergency situations; and

WHEREAS, the volunteer members of the Wilson County Emergency Management Agency (WEMA) K9 Search and Rescue Team and Fire Department have served with courage and gallantry and deserve proper recognition for their heroism and willingness to risk themselves in order to save lives; and

WHEREAS, WEMA is a career department which addresses the community's needs in the areas of emergency medical services, fire suppression, rescue, hazardous materials, water-related emergencies, and disaster management; it also has several citizen volunteer units which serve the good people of Wilson County, including the K9 Search and Rescue Team, the Disaster Animal Rescue Team, and the Community Emergency Response Team; and

WHEREAS, founded in November of 2006 at the request of WEMA Director Jerry McFarland, the K9 Search and Rescue Team was created by Dr. Melissa Riley, who provided the first operational dog. At the present time, the unit has six operational dogs, with nine more in training; and

WHEREAS, the WEMA K9 Search and Rescue Team and Fire Department sprang into immediate action on the night of February 5, 2008, responding to aid the victims of powerful tornadoes that struck Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the group first responded to the Castilian Springs community of Sumner County, where it split into two parties, composed of members of both the WEMA K9 Search and Rescue Team and the WEMA Fire Department, in order to scour the area for survivors and those in need of help; and

WHEREAS, searching in the vicinity of what had previously been the Castilian Springs Post Office, the group canvassed the rubble that remained of the town until one of the team's dogs indicated that it had found someone; WEMA Firefighter David Harmon then discovered an eleven-month-old boy, Kyson Stowell, who the tornado had thrown several hundred feet from his home; and

WHEREAS, the toddler was found face down in the mud, covered with scrapes and abrasions and possibly suffering from internal injuries; his rescue was truly miraculous, as the area was hit a half hour later with another round of severe storms, which Kyson would most likely not have survived; and

WHEREAS, during the initial storm, Kyson was taken into a bathtub by his mother, Kerri Stowell, a twenty-three-year-old woman who, after bravely protecting her son, was thrown in the opposite direction and, unfortunately, died as a result of the injuries she suffered. Kyson was later released from the hospital to the custody and care of his maternal grandparents, Kay and Douglas Stowell, who, along with Kyson's father Corey Noble, are eternally grateful to the K9 Search and Rescue Team for the toddler's rescue; and

WHEREAS, the WEMA teams also admirably assisted with recovery efforts in the tornado-devastated areas of Trousdale and Macon Counties, further serving their fellow citizens in a time of desperate need; and

WHEREAS, the WEMA K9 Search and Rescue Team members who bravely responded on that night were Melissa Riley, Cameron Kendrick, Butch Lyle, Michael Fay, Sr., Lisa Parks, Janet Bushbaum, Nikki Rose, Tom Rose, Jason Peacher, and their courageous canine service members Stormy, Maggie, Guinness, Champ, Belay, and Nina. They were accompanied by

WEMA Fire Department members Andy Bates, Karl Wegner, David Harmon, and Robbie Bennett; and

WHEREAS, the WEMA K9 Search and Rescue Team and Fire Department performed their duties with the utmost skill, dedication, and professionalism. They epitomize the spirit and commitment that characterize true Tennesseans, and their service can only be categorized as outstanding; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend the men, women, and canine heroes of the Wilson County Emergency Management Agency K9 Search and Rescue Team and Fire Department for their meritorious service, as we offer our sincere thanks for a difficult job well done.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.